(b) whether Government's attention has been drawn to an article on the subject which was followed by controversy in the press as per the Economic Times dated the 14th and 24th February and 5th March, 1993; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI BHUVNESH CHATURVEDI): (a) Government is aware of consumer resistance in some countries for the food irradiation technology. Such resistance is not world wide. Food Irradiation Technology is being promoted in this country because of its benefits such as preserving the food items and extending the storage life of perishable agricultural products without any detrimental health consequences. As many as twenty five countries including USA, UK, Canada, having high consumer awareness are practicing food irradiation for selected food items on a commercial basis. Based on our own investigation, we are satisfied that food irradiation is a safe process for preservation of perishable agricultural commodities without any detrimental health effects. International Trade in irradiated food items is rapidly picking up and it is expected that with the harmonization of regulations, and establishment of modalities for exporting irradiated food the volume of trade will increase significantly.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The Government are convinced about the safety and beneficial effects of food irradiation technology. A few items have already been cleared by the Government for irradiation. For the preservation of perishable agricultural commodities like potato, onions and spices this technology is proposed to be introduced on commercial scale after initial technology demonstration.

Voluntary Retirement Scheme in HFC, Namrup

3869. SHRI BHADRESWAR GOHAIN: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 455 given in the Rajya Sabha on 24th February, 1994 and state:

(a) the reasons to ask the employees of Namrup units I & II of Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation to opt for voluntary retirement scheme; and

(b) whether Government will issue a direction to these units not to encourage voluntary retirement scheme ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) The Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS), which aims at the reduction of surplus manpower, has been in operation in all the Units of Hindustan Fertilizer Corporation (HFC), including its Namrup Units I & II, since 1989-90.

(b) No, Sir.

Revision of formulation prices

3870. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that drug companies are statutorily required to get the formulation prices revised after the bulk drug is procured at lower or higher prices;

(b) if so, whether M/s. Hoechst, M/s. Sandoz, in respect of Tetracycline and M/s. Pifizer in respect of oxytetracycline did not get the formulation prices reduced after procuring these bulk drugs at prices lower than prices allowed in the formulations during the last three years;

(c) what is the quantity procured by each company and the price thereof during the last three years, yearwise, and what was the price allowed to them in the formulations ; and

(d) whether it is a fact that Government companies have been protected by not monitoring the imports ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI EDUARDO FALEIRO): (a) and (b) In accordance with the provisions of DPCO'87, the formulators are required to apply for price revision as and when the price of the price controlled bulk drugs or norms for other cost inputs are revised by the Government. The actual procurement price of bulk drug may however, vary depending on its availability, source and quantum of procurement etc. However, price controlled bulk drug cannot be sold at a price higher than the price fixed by the Government. If sharp variation is noticed necessary steps are taken to revise the price of such price controlled bulk drugs.

(c) Details of procurement by the companies are not monitored. Prices of Tetracycline and Oxytetracycline considered in working out the formulation prices from time to time are as under:

Name of the bulk Drug.	Price/Kg. (Rs.)	Date
(1)	(2)	(3)
TETRACYCLINE :		
(i)	1022.00	9-8-1990
(ii)	1084.00	26-2-1991
(iii)	1095.00	25-9-1991
(iv)	1212.00	21-1-1992
(v)	1294.00	16-6-1992